

STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF IOWA
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The Annals of Iowa

Volume 55 | Number 1 (Winter 1996)

pps. 92-92

Aristocracy on the Western Frontier: the Legacy of the Marquis De Mores

ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

"Aristocracy on the Western Frontier: the Legacy of the Marquis De Mores." *The Annals of Iowa* 55 (1996), 92-92.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.10012>

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Aristocracy on the Western Frontier: The Legacy of the Marquis de Mores, edited by Virginia Heidenreich-Barber. Bismarck: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1994. 57 pp. Illustrations. \$6.50 paper.

REVIEWED BY PAULA M. NELSON, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-PLATTEVILLE

The Marquis de Mores and his wife, Medora, came to northwestern Dakota Territory in 1883 hoping to make a fortune in the meat-packing industry. Their venture failed spectacularly and they departed for adventures elsewhere in 1886. The three essays in this nicely produced booklet help answer some important questions about the de Mores and their tumultuous years on the Dakota plains.

The first essay, D. Jerome Tweton's "The Marquis de Mores in the Badlands of Dakota," places the marquis squarely within the entrepreneurial spirit of the Gilded Age. Tweton's reasoned discussion explains the visions and possibilities of the times and locates de Mores' failures in the many distractions that beset him during the formative years of his endeavor.

The second essay, by Frank E. Vyzralek, explains in detail the most pressing distraction, the trial of the marquis for murder. Several locals, angry over the marquis' fencing of the range, engaged him in a gun battle. Subsequently charged with murder, the marquis embarked on a two-year legal odyssey that made fascinating newspaper copy and, as recounted here, reveals much about frontier justice.

The final essay details Medora Von Hoffman's vision for the chateau she and her husband built in the North Dakota Badlands. The chateau brought a touch of the aristocracy to the arid plains. Mary S. Hoffschweli's essay explains how the home's structure and decor can provide clues to the daily life of the nineteenth-century elite.

In sum, *Aristocracy on the Western Frontier* is a useful introduction to the de Mores legacy.

Early Stories from the Land: Short-Story Fiction from American Rural Magazines 1900-1925, edited by Robert G. Hays. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1995. xx, 300 pp. Illustrations. \$19.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY KURT E. LEICHTLE, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-RIVER FALLS

Dr. Hays's ear for stories is excellent; these were the types of stories I heard while leaning on the counter in my grandfather's Wisconsin store. This interesting and entertaining collection of stories from farm journals and magazines of the early twentieth century features tales about six topics: humor, machinery, romance, the human condition, women, and animals. The stories span the nation, though most contain

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